

June 3, 1999

To: Environmental Health Managers
District Health Directors
OEHS Staff
Virginia Tech Contract Soil Scientists

From: Donald J. Alexander, Director
Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services

Subject: Interim Qualifications become an Authorized
Onsite Soil Evaluator **GMP #99**

Attached is the first of several policies (GMPs) that the Division plans to adopt in order to implement HB 2337 and SB 963. This policy establishes the manner by which the Department will qualify a Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS) as an Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator. All applications will be handled by the Division and a list of successful applicants will be maintained on the Division's Intranet site. This policy is effective immediately.

Future policies will forthcoming and will address the documentation that must be included with an AOSE site evaluation and design and how the Department will process these applications. I appreciate the comments and concerns received on how we implement this new program and I hope to continue to receive your suggestions.

Interim Procedure to Qualify a
Certified Professional Soil Scientist as an
Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator (AOSE)
GMP #99

Introduction

Section 32.1-164.G provides that until July 1, 2001, a person holding a certificate as a Virginia certified professional soil scientist (CPSS) from the Board of Professional Soil Scientists, who can demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to conduct an onsite soil evaluation, shall be deemed qualified to be an authorized onsite soil evaluator (AOSE) upon application to the Department. This policy is intended to provide initial implementation guidance on how an individual can qualify with the Department as an AOSE.

Application for interim approval as an AOSE until July 1, 2001.

Any CPSS seeking interim approval as an AOSE must file a complete application with the Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services (Virginia Department of Health, Room 117, P.O. Box 2448, Richmond, Virginia 23218). The application shall be on the form provided in Appendix A and shall include:

1. Proof that he or she is a Virginia Certified Professional Soil Scientist, and
2. Documentation supporting the applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities to competently evaluate soils for onsite wastewater systems. This requirement must be accomplished by submitting the following items in accordance with the requirements of this policy:
 - Three references;
 - Two site evaluations; and
 - Two traditional system designs.

Demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

An applicant seeking interim certification as an AOSE must demonstrate that he or she possesses the knowledge, skills and abilities to evaluate site and soil conditions for onsite sewage systems. The applicant must show that he or she has spent at least 2 of the last 5 years evaluating site and soil conditions for onsite sewage systems in Virginia in accordance with the Board of Health's Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations (12 VAC 5-610-10 et seq., the "Regulations"). This is to be accomplished by:

1. **Site Evaluations.** Providing two complete site evaluation reports (Form CHS 201A and B or an equivalent form containing the same information) from each of

two different calendar years within the last five years. The evaluation reports must have been actually submitted to a local health department in the Commonwealth in support of an application for a permit, letter, or subdivision approval. The reports must comply with the minimum requirements of the Regulations for such reports. A satisfactory report *must* contain the following required items:

- Soil textures identified using USDA field texture nomenclature;
- Soil colors identified using either the Munsell linguistic color equivalents or hue, value, and chroma;
- Property location including the county and Tax Map #, address or other specific identifier;
- Three profile descriptions establishing a suitable area for a traditional system;
- Sketch showing property boundaries;
- Name of the evaluator (must be same as the AOSE applicant);
- Sketch showing profile hole locations (locating the site within 10');;
- Owner's name, address, and phone number;
- Date of evaluation; and
- The estimated percolation rate for the proposed absorption system.

2. Other evaluations. A CPSS unable to provide the required soil evaluation reports may make a written request for a waiver to the requirements contained in item 1 above and submit other documentation for consideration by the Division on a case-by-case basis.

3. System design. Based on the site and soil information provided in item 1 or 2 above, the applicant shall complete and submit an abbreviated system design for a traditional system that complies with the *Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations*. At a minimum, the design shall include the following elements:

- A sketch showing the house, the septic tank, distribution box, and absorption system;
- The total square footage of absorption area required;
- The number of absorption trenches used;
- The length and width of the absorption trenches;
- The installation depth of the absorption trenches; and
- The slope over the absorption area.

References.

Each interim AOSE applicant shall provide three professional references. References shall be made on a form approved by the Department (see Appendix B). References must attest to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of an applicant to perform the work necessary to site and design a system in accordance with the *Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations* and confirm that the applicant has at least two years experience during the previous five years, conducting onsite soil evaluations. All references must be from citizens of the Commonwealth who are not related to or employed by the applicant. VDH employees may provide references at their discretion.

References may be submitted in either of two ways. The person making the reference may mail it to the Division using the address on the reference form. Alternatively, the reference may be returned to the applicant for inclusion with their application. In the latter case, the reference should be returned to the applicant in a sealed enveloped and enclosed (unopened) with the application.

Application review.

The Division shall review applications for certification as an AOSE. This review shall include:

An application review to assure the application is complete, and

Verification with the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulations that the applicant is a certified professional soil scientist in Virginia, and

Review of site and soil information and system designs submitted with the application to confirm compliance with the *Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations*, and

Review of references to assure that the applicant has two years of relevant experience in the past five years and possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform as an AOSE.

If the Division finds that an applicant has failed to submit a complete application or has failed to demonstrate the required knowledge, skills and abilities, the application for status as an AOSE shall be denied. The denial letter shall state the reasons for denial and will be sent by certified mail to the address listed on the application or delivered by hand. A denial is deemed to be a case decision and may be appealed in accordance with section 12 VAC 5-610-200.A of the *Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations* (informal hearing) and the Administrative Process Act (9.6-14:11). Written requests for a hearing

must be received within 30 days of receipt of the application denial. The commissioner will appoint a staff member to hear any informal appeals. All appeals will be held in the Department of Health Central Office in Richmond, VA.

Certification as an AOSE.

After submitting a complete application and successfully demonstrating the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, the Division will assign an AOSE identification number and issue a statement that authorizes the applicant as an AOSE. Authorizations issued under this policy will be valid, unless revoked or suspended, until July 1, 2001.

The names of individuals authorized by the Department as AOsEs under this interim policy will be furnished to all local and district health departments.

In accordance with § 32.1-164 of the *Code of Virginia* and the Department's policy GMP #99, this application must be completed and submitted with the requested supporting documentation and an application fee of \$100 (checks only, made payable to the Commonwealth of Virginia) in order to be considered as an Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator. If a question is not applicable, mark "N/A". All blocks must be completed. Please type your responses.

I certify that the information provided on this application is true. Further, I understand that providing false or misleading information or suppressing information on this application may result in denial of my application or the suspension or revocation of my standing as an Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator if my application has been approved.

Applications should be submitted to: The Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services
PO Box 2448
1500 E. Main St., Room 117
Richmond, VA 23218. **Attention AOSE Application**

Appendix B
**Authorized Onsite Soil Evaluator
Reference Form**

Name (applicant)	Name (of person giving reference)
Address	Address
Phone Number	Phone Number
How many years have you known the applicant? Years known _____	Do you attest that the applicant has been employed conducting onsite soil evaluations for at least two of the past five years? Yes _____ No _____
Do you attest that the applicant has the knowledge, skills and abilities to work as an authorized onsite soil evaluator and to do so in compliance with the <i>Sewage Handling and Disposal Regulations</i> ? Yes _____ No _____	What relationship do you have with the applicant that makes you familiar with their knowledge, skills, and abilities?
Please provide any other comments you wish to make here. (This section is optional)	

Signed _____ Date _____

Applications may either sealed in an envelope and returned to the applicant for enclosure with their application or mailed directly to:

The Division of Onsite Sewage and Water Services
PO Box 2448
1500 E. Main St., Room 117
Richmond, VA 23218.

Attention AOSE Reference